



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



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MINUTES

California-Mexico Border Relations Council

June 10, 2008 | 1:30-4:00PM
Tijuana River Estuary Center
301 Caspian Way
Imperial Beach, California

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 PM by Chairwoman Adams

I. Introductions

::: The following Council members were present:

*Secretary Linda Adams, California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA),
Chair*

*Secretary Kim Belshe, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS),
was represented by Richard Rodriguez, Department of Public Health (DPH)*

*Secretary A.G. Kawamura, California Department of Food and Agriculture
(CDFA)*

Secretary Mike Chrisman, Resources Agency (Resources)

Director Henry Renteria, Office of Emergency Services (OES)

Secretary Dale Bonner, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency (BT&H)

II. Procedural Matters

::: Secretary Adams reported that the Council meetings will operate under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act processes and procedures. All public documents were made available.

III. Minutes

::: The minutes of the February 20, 2008 meeting were approved as written.

IV. Council Background

::: Chairwoman Adams reported that the California-Mexico Border Relations Council was formed as a result of AB 1321 of 2006 (Nunez). The

purpose of the Council is to address issues that exist along the California-Mexican border and cross border relations.

The Chairwoman noted that the meeting site was chosen to introduce members to the border region and demonstrate the work that Homeland Security is doing on the border.

V. Mission/Vision

::: A minor revision to the draft of the Mission and Vision Statement was offered by Secretary Bonner, and the Statement was adopted by the Council.

VI. New Business

::: The Council chose to incorporate new business into the Border Issues & Programs presentations (VII. Border Issues & Program).

VII. Border Issues & Programs

::: Each member presented an overview of border activities happening at their agency:

- **Business, Transportation & Housing Agency**

Secretary Bonner reported that both California Highway Patrol and CalTrans are involved in many border issues. He noted that BT&H will have four worktables at the XVI Border Governors' Conference (BGC). He spoke about the United States Border Master Plan to coordinate infrastructure on the border and at points of entry. With the growing interest in security issues, he emphasized the importance of engaging with the federal government. He suggested using the Council as a forum to bring Federal authorities to the table. Both CalTrans, in relation to infrastructure projects, and the Department of Homeland Security, in relation to their E-trace program, also emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong federal-state relationship.

- **Health & Human Services Agency:**

Richard Rodriguez (Department of Public Health) discussed tying the Council's work to the work of the Border Governors collective efforts. He made a presentation on a California-Mexico partnership, the Early Warning Infectious Disease Surveillance program, consisting of three programs: the US Mexico Lead Initiative; the CA-Baja Pesticide Illness Surveillance and Exposure Prevention Program; and the Bi-national Cervical Cancer Outreach Project. Mr. Rodriguez noted that DPH is in communication with the federal government regarding Epi-data and the need to exchange data state-to-state. Mexico has signed off on the idea; the United States has not. Additionally, he spoke about a drug resistant strand of TB that has emerged along the border; DPH will be asking the US for financial assistance. Finally, Mr. Rodriguez discussed Bi-National Border Health Week which will address the issues of obesity and diabetes prevention and education.

- **California Environmental Protection Agency:**

Chairwoman Adams talked about a Cal/EPA program that translates wastewater treatment operator manuals into Spanish for distribution in Mexico. Additionally, through the Border 2012 program, Chairwoman Adams explained, the California Air Resources Board has air monitoring equipment with the State of Baja. Finally, Secretary Adams noted that final work was being done on the 2008 BGC. Ideas discussed at the BGC will be incorporated into future Council meetings.

- **Resources Agency**

Secretary Chrisman discussed his work on the Water and Wildlife worktable between Baja and California at the BGC. He talked about the All-American Canal which runs parallel to the Mexican border. It was unlined for many years and has created a groundwater aquifer that farmers depend on. He felt that it will be important that the Council look at issues of how to mitigate estuary concerns as well as habitat corridor and linkages to protect them. Secretary Chrisman discussed the International Boundary and Water Commission whose members include Darlene Ruiz, Jeanine Jones, and Lester Snow. Secretary Chrisman also stressed the importance of cross-border equipment sharing and the cross-border MOU on fires that would allow firefighters to travel 10-15 miles across the border. Deputy Secretary Todd Ferrara discussed the problems of the Tijuana River Estuary, including habitat, tires, trash, and water quality. He discussed the efforts of the local, state and federal groups including the California Biodiversity Council.

- **Office of Emergency Services**

Director Renteria noted that all related statutes need to be looked at in relation to cross border issues and the surplus of fire engines. He pointed out that locals can transfer through "sister cities." The BGC Emergency Services sub worktable has focused on response issues, but in the future he would like to move to mitigation and prevention. OES is looking for federal enactment of this, as well as a training curriculum catalog to provide training for Mexico's first responders such as HazMat, Search & Rescue, and other sources. OES is working on a disaster training exercise for an August 14 event, which was funded by the US/EPA Knowledge Exchange Program in cooperation with Barbara Mako. He discusses the tri-national roundtable with Canada and Mexico, that OES is participating in along with FEMA and NORAD. Finally, OES is working with DPH and CHHSA on a Pandemic Flu training.

- **Department of Food and Agriculture**

Secretary Kawamura made a presentation regarding the Border Relations "Dialogue Concept" Roundtable. He explained that the roundtable could be utilized in many ways including discussion of the Quagga Muscle, an invasive species that has been clogging the canals and waterways and has the potential to get into the All-American Canal. Secretary Chrisman added that it is important to have a plan, as dewatering currently is the only way to remove the Quagga Muscle. DFG has mussel-sniffing dogs.

VIII. Update: Opportunities for Coordination

::: AB 2317 (Ducheny)- How to apply and implement AB 2317 along the border.

- The Council discussed addressing issues related to transferring equipment into Baja California. It was recommended that the Council look at a trailer bill or additional legislation so that the California- Mexico Border Relations Council can replace the California Border Environmental Cooperation Committee as the coordinating council. Under the current system, a request is made, a response is given, and then the goods are sent across the border. The goal is to change the authority of transferring the equipment to the Council, specifically covering used and surplus equipment. For the next meeting, the Council would like proposed amendments regarding new/used equipment and services to be submitted to the GO as joint legislative proposal. Action Item to propose amendments to legislation. Renteria made a motion which was seconded by Jen Grutzius on behalf of Dale Bonner.

IX. Update: Managing Shared Ecosystems & Goods Movement

::: David Pagan, Federal Office of Homeland Security, made a presentation of Homeland Security efforts along the border.

- David Pagan gave an overview of the efforts of California Border Patrol (CBP) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with regard to border security and the border fence. CBP and DHS are interested in the way that this Council is tackling so many simultaneous issues including balancing the federal and states interests. Chairwoman Adams asked if the Council could weigh in on the issues. Mr. Pagan will welcome feedback but noted that some decisions have already been made.

X. Update: 2008 Border Governors Conference

::: The role that the Council can play in the BGC and beyond was discussed.

- Daniel Garza, Cal/EPA, provided an update on the agenda for the Border Governors Conference, which will take place August 13-15, 2008 at Universal Studios. The primary theme of this year's conference is "Building Green Economies."
- Secretary Bonner discussed the formation of an economic forum/ council where the ten border states could discuss pressing economic issues. Secretary George Shultz will be California's representative.
- The Council discussed a Western Regional carbon trading program, AB 32 Scoping Plan, and Western Climate Initiative.
- Moving forward, the Council would like to look at ways that it can be more involved in the BGC.

XI. Topics for Future Meetings

- The next meeting will be in September where the Council will look at
 - i. AB2317 (Ducheny) and possible revisions.
 - ii. Update on Border Governors Conference
 - iii. Quagga Muscle
 - iv. Federal counterpart interaction during change of administration
 - v. Estuary issues and push for mitigation efforts overall.
 - vi. Dorothea Kim (CDFA) suggested a “Partnership Council” to be made up of representatives of the states (suggested a generic item or action item such as a letter to Homeland Security).
 - vii. Border Master Plan (agreement on criteria and prioritization of projects along border on entries between both nations) and coordination on infrastructure (Dale Bonner). The Council would like a presentation on the Border Master Plan.
 - viii. Update to catalog that we looked at first meeting, listing all border programs.

XII. Public Comment

1. **John Robertus**, Executive Officer of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, stated his concerns about trash and sediment in the Tijuana River Estuary. He felt that the Council should address these issues.
2. **Heather Scott**, on behalf of Speaker Bass, recommended not to consolidate equipment and send it to the Department of General Services. This would allow the Legislature to have better oversight through the budget process. She suggested that the Council needs a liaison with the Legislature.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chairwoman Adams at 3:45 PM.